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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1256  
INFO RUEHKK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD PRIORITY 0192  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
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UNCLAS DAMASCUS 004236

SIPDIS

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SENSITIVE

PARIS FOR WALLER, LONDON FOR TSOU, PRM/FO, AMMAN FOR GREEN,  
CAIRO FOR CHEYNE

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: UNICEF ACTING REPRESENTATIVE SKETCHES OUT SYRIA  
SITUATION

1. (SBU) The Chargé paid a courtesy call August 27 on UNICEF's acting director, Marc Lucet, who said that UNHCR, WFP and UNICEF planned to do a joint assessment of the remaining displaced Lebanese who are thought to be staying in private homes in about six locations in Syria. UN agencies had reports so far of only a few Lebanese returning to Syria, although they expect some Lebanese may eventually use Syria as a safehaven during the rebuilding of their homes, Lucet said.

2. (U) UNHCR and UNICEF plan to stockpile relief supplies in Syria, sufficient for one month for 20,000 people, Lucet said. UNHCR's supplies would primarily deal with shelter, while UNICEF would include hygiene and health items, as well as recreational supplies.

3. (U) UNICEF is making preparations to support 2,500 displaced Lebanese, primarily in Damascus and its surroundings, as well as Homs, Lucet said. It is also rehabilitating, in direct coordination with the Ministry of Education, 30 schools that were occupied by displaced Lebanese, and it will assist the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor in the establishment of five centers to host up to 2,000 persons as a contingency for any future crisis, he said.

4. (U) Separately, UNICEF plans to assist up to 2,000 of the most vulnerable Iraqi families in Syria, in hopes of boosting the school attendance rate of Iraqi children, given figures indicating that up to 30 percent of displaced Iraqi children in Syria do not attend school, Lucet said. UNICEF's regional headquarters, based in Amman, is focused on dealing with the issue of displaced Iraqis in the same way that it regionally handles assistance to Palestinians, the UNICEF acting director said.

5. (SBU) The UN Resident Coordinator's office in Damascus said Monday that it has canceled donor consultations in Damascus, after postponing the meeting originally set for August 22.  
CORBIN